661 Professor Ignatovskii was widely known and very popular for his prominent activities. In those days the G. P. U. did not yet dare to throw him in a cellar and make short work of him. As a result of his suicide there were persistent rumors that the G. P. U. had succeeded in getting Professor Ignatoviskii to name those members of the national movement who had taken upon themselves to check the Soviet regime in Belorussia and establish a democratic system. The professor preferred death, but even before his suicide the movement had been dealt a telling blow by the arrest of the People's Commissar of Agriculture of the B. S. S. R., Dimitrii Prishchepov. Himself a son of the people and a former teacher he was well able to understand the age long striving of the Belorussian peasant for a private farm of his own. He knew the reasons for the backwardness, poverty, and need 241 of the countryside. Before collectivization, his activities had been 423 directed toward strengthening the private working peasant's position 661 by building them homesteads which were generally grouped in small hamlets but frequently isolated. This arrangement gave the peasant wide scope for his own initiative, and he could also draw on state agricultural assistance. /21/ This tendency in the work of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture turned out to be in complete contradiction to the Kremlin's avowed policy of collectivizing agriculture, and besides, an unheard of tempo of collectivization was demanded, with the country's total efforts directed at the destruction of the private peasants' farmstead to be replaced by the other, so-called socialist, form of agriculture. The most prosperous farms were ruined completely and their proprietors assigned to the outlawed category of kulaks -- then they were carted away under inhuman conditions and sent out to the most godforsaken and uninhabited regions of Siberia. The peasants who still remained unsubdued were tagged as podkulachnik' and subjected to public persecution and economic pressure in the form of a high head tax -- in spite of the fact that these peasants were the ones who had most of the diplomas and certificates which the Soviet government had given out for high showings in animal husbandry, gardening, truck 661 farming, etc. The People's Commissariat of Agriculture had to play first violin in this destruction -- in other words it had to destroy

1 [D. Prishchepov, Peoples Commissar of Agriculture to 1930 - Analyst]

438 A large-scale industry had developed. In place of the semi-handicraft workshops which predominated in the old days, large modern factories arose. The timber industry was modernised and developed 433 for increased production of prefabricated dwellings, paper, cardboard, matches, chemical products, and artificial silk. Industries, such as meat-packing, starch and treacle, distilling, dairy produce, tanning, and flax, were highly developed. The mineral resources of the country served as a basis for the building up of the pottery, glass, cement, and similar industries. The engineering plants in Byelorussia turned out machine tools, agricultural machinery and peat-cutting machinery. The extraction of peat was conducted on an extensive scale.

433 After the Revolution, agriculture in Byelorussia also underwent a fundamental change. The individual peasants united in collective ● 241 farms (kolkhozes) in which they jointly cultivated the soil and had their co-operative dairy farms, piggeries, poultry runs, and beehives. 474 They received substantial assistance from the state in the form of financial credits, tractors, harvester combines, and other agricultural machinery, seeds, equipment for draining marsh-lands, and innumerable other kinds of assistance. Under the Soviet system the cultivated areas of Byelorussia increased considerably, and in 1937 exceeded that of 1913 by 35 per cent.

Area and Population

Area

131 The present area of the Byelorussian Republic is about 228,300 square kilometres. Nearly half of this territory was added in September 1939 when, after the collapse of the Polish State, Western Byelorussia, which had been seized by Poland in 1920, was rejoined to the B.S.S.R. as part of the Soviet Union. The area of this region was 108,000 square kilometres, and the population, 4.8 millions. Of this added territory, 35.5 per cent. was classified as arable, 23.5 per cent. as forests, 24 per cent. as pastures and meadows, and 1.5 per cent. as gardens and orchards.

In August 1940 the area of Byelorussia decreased somewhat when parts of the Vileika and the Baranovichi provinces were transferred [728] from the B.S.S.R. to the Lithuanian Soviet Republic. Another small decrease occurred after the war in Europe had ended; in August 1945 a treaty was signed between Poland and the U.S.S.R., adjusting the Soviet-Polish frontier roughly along the "Curzon Line", with some deviations in Poland's favour. In consequence of this, Poland received a small strip of the territory which had been previously incorporated in the B.S.S.R., including the largest town of Western Byelorussia, Bialystok.

Population

162 At the census of January 1939 the population of the B.S.S.R. was 5,567,976 (an increase of 11.7 per cent. over December 1926, when the

[Between 1919 and 1941 -- Analyst]

II AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK BREEDING AND FISHING

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Before the war Byelorussia was one of the largest flax and potato-growing areas in the Soviet Union. In 1937, two years before the incorporation of Western Byelorussia, there were 255,000 hectares sown to flax and 631,000 hectares sown to potatoes in the B.S.S.R. The chief food crop produced in this Republic was grain (rye, wheat, oats, and barley), which occupied about 60 per cent. of the total area sown. In 1937 2,243,500 hectares were planted in grain, including 242,500 hectares of wheat, which before 1917 was produced on a very small scale.

The following table shows the area of the principal crops in the Byelorussian Republic in 1932 and 1937, compared with cultivated areas in the Soviet Union as a whole.

TABLE III

Byelorussian S.S.R.: Area of Principal Crops, 1932 and 1937
(thousand hectares)

	Byelorussian Republic		Soviet Union	
	1932	1937	1932	1937
Wheat	111	242.5	34,500	41,300
Rye	1,313	n.a.	25,800	22,700
Oats	613	"	15,400	17,600
All grain total	2,627	2,243.5	99,700	114,400
Potatoes	619	631	6,100	6,900
Flax and hemp	279	255	2,500[1]	2,125[1]
Orchards and gardens	76	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Total area under crop	3,983	3,514	134,400	135,300

1 Flax only.

Note: n.a. means not available.

Sources: Development of the Soviet Economy, Moscow, 1940; Second Five Year Plan, Vol. II, Moscow, 1934; Socialist Construction, Moscow, 1939; and Sown Areas of the U.S.S.R., Moscow, 1939.

From 1932 to 1937, as the table shows, there was a decrease of 468,000 hectares in the area under cultivation in the B.S.S.R. Average yields of all crops, however, had been increased to a great extent, so that total production was raised by several million tons.

TABLE IV

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Byelorussian S.S.R.: Production of Principal Crops, 1932 and 1937
(thousand metric tons)

	Byelorussian Republic		Soviet Union	
	1932	1937	1932	1937
Wheat	77.4	202.6	20,310.0	46,860.0
Other grain	1,616.3	1,618.3	49,480.0	73,430.0
Total grain	1,693.7	1,820.9	69,790.0	120,290.0
Potatoes	5,061.0	7,005.6	43,070.0	65,630.0
Flax	57.4	71.4	500.0	n.a.

Sources: Socialist Construction, Moscow, 1936 and 1939; Sown Areas of the U.S.S.R., Moscow, 1939; and Socialist Agriculture, Moscow, 1939.

Since the natural fertility of Byelorussian soil is not very high, improvements in the yields of various crops depend greatly on efficient cultivation, particularly on generous fertilizing, and other modern measures (including mechanization) which were widely applied on the farms of the U.S.S.R. during the collectivization of agriculture.

Collective Farms (Kolkhozes)

474 The greatest agricultural problems of the Soviet Union have been to increase the area under cultivation, to improve the methods of production, to raise yields per hectare as well as total production, and from this increased production, to insure that adequate supplies of food reach the towns and factories. The primary means of achieving these aims was the organization of individual farmers into collectives (kolkhozes), in which they could jointly maintain their livestock and work the land, using the most scientific methods of livestock breeding, soil cultivation, crop rotation and fertilizing, but above all, increasing the use of farm machinery. In the long run mechanization, with the replacement of horses by tractors, makes a greater area available for grain and other agricultural products such as potatoes and flax.

475 An outstanding feature of these new developments was the establishment of machine and tractor stations (M.T.S.), in which the government concentrated thousands of tractors, threshers, combines, and other large machines. The M.T.S., which had their own workshops and staffs of mechanics, carried out all the mechanized farm work for the collectives - ploughing, sowing, harvesting, etc. - in return for which they received fixed fees, payable in agricultural produce.

407 outbreak of the German attack, it was estimated that the B.S.S.R had 12,000 tractors, 1,500 combine harvesters, and 20,000 other agricultural machines.

Agricultural Development of Western Byelorussia

241 311 The arable area of the Byelorussian Republic was increased by about 3,597,000 hectares in 1939, when Western Byelorussia was rejoined to the Soviet Union. According to the Concise Statistical Yearbook of Poland, London, 1941, this territory in 1938 had 136,000 hectares under cultivation of wheat, 1,132,000 hectares under rye, 664,000 hectares under oats and barley, 518,000 under potatoes, and 60,000 hectares sown to flax.

241 423 Before the incorporation of the western territory into the B.S.S.R., its agriculture was primitive. Eighty to 90 per cent. of the population were engaged in agricultural work, and there was practically no mechanisation. After 1939, however, many changes were made. The People's Assembly of Western Byelorussia declared all land, timber, and water resources to be the property of the state, (that is, public property);; and subsequently, 646,000 hectares of land were distributed among the poorer peasants, as well as 540,000 hectares taken from large estates and given to poor and middle-class farmers and to formerly landless hired men. Fourteen thousand hired men and poor peasants also received horses, and 33,400 households received cows.

474 [475] Many of the farmholdings were then organized into collectives; about 1,000 kolkhozes were formed in a short time, and over 100 machine and tractor stations erected. In 1940 these west Byelorussian M.T.S. had 1,500 tractors at their disposal - about 15 per cent. of all the tractors held by the M.T.S. of the Republic.

[727] The process of collectivisation in Western Byelorussia was interrupted by the German occupation, which destroyed the Soviet system of land utilization, and at present the work of reorganisation is not moving along very rapidly. By 1946 only about 100 collective farms, combining 2,802 individual holdings, had been reorganized and were again functioning; and this is but a small fraction of the peasant population in the western region. However, government officials state that no immediate pressure is being exerted to promote collective farms.

German Devastation of Agriculture

727 241 The German occupation from June 1941 until the summer of 1944 left Byelorussian agriculture exhausted and devastated. The enemy had destroyed 9,200 villages and more than 1,200,000 peasant holdings. Ninety-two state farms and about 10,000 collective farms had been plundered and destroyed. All the food processing plants had been blown up; and over 316 machine and tractor stations had suffered destruction and looting; from them the Republic lost 8,996 tractors, 1,105 harvester combines, and countless numbers of other agricultural machines which the Germans either wrecked or carried off to Germany.

727 231 Livestock was practically wiped out; the Germans had confiscated more than two million head of cattle, three million pigs, and three million sheep and goats. A few cattle had been hidden away in the woods and swamps. The only horses left were those which had been either too old or too small for army use, and therefore discarded by the German or Soviet armies. Most small livestock had disappeared, and poultry and bees had vanished completely.

727 241 433 The land itself was in a terrible condition. Orchards were neglected; and drainage systems had been either deliberately ruined to flood the land, or permitted to deteriorate. Crop areas had sharply decreased, and yields fell drastically for want of fertilizers and draught power to cultivate the land efficiently. The area of cereals had fallen by 42 per cent., that of technical crops by 86 per cent., and of potatoes, by 53 per cent. Crop rotation had been completely upset, and grasslands ruined. Nearly 20 per cent. of Byelorussian territory was literally a desert.

When the UNRRA Mission arrived in Byelorussia nearly two years after the liberation, agricultural conditions had not materially improved. In the course of a tour through eastern Byelorussia in June 1946, Mission members reported that "throughout the northeast region at least half the rural houses are destroyed." Some regions showed even greater destruction; in the Surazh region east of Vitebsk, only 661 houses remained in 1944 out of 10,136 pre-war dwellings. The town of Surazh itself had 1,395 buildings before the war, of which only three were standing in 1944. By June 1946 there were 150 buildings in the town, all newly built except the three mentioned.

In the Polotsk and Vitebsk oblasts (provinces) only 58 and 64 per cent. respectively of the pre-war crop areas were under cultivation in 1946, two years after the liberation. In 1945 the crop yields were only 25 per cent. of pre-war production. The UNRRA Mission stated: "The low yields and unplanted lands are largely due to lack of tractors and to the plough-land having become overgrown with weeds and brush since 1941. A large proportion of cropland is reported to be now idle because of uncleared mines, trenches, gun emplacements, etc. In the Surazh region uncultivated battlefields total one-quarter of the pre-war 87,500 acres of crop land."

The Polotsk and Vitebsk provinces possessed before the war 115,000 horses and 2,290 tractors; and about 2 million acres of land were under cultivation. In 1946 only 24,000 horses and 760 tractors were available; and 40 per cent. of the cropland remained uncultivated.

080 Since the time of these observations UNRRA Mission members have made many more inspection tours throughout the Republic. Among the many places they have had opportunity to observe was the Lenin Collective Farm in the Minsk raion (district), which they visited in December 1946. Because the experience of this farm is fairly typical, a small part of its history is reproduced in the following paragraphs.

[In the war period from June 1941 to the summer of 1944 -- Analyst]

474 727 The farmers had hidden their ploughs, harrows, and small implements so that these were available with which to begin farming again in 1944; but all the heavy equipment was lost. Livestock losses amounted to 500 cattle, 125 horses, approximately 1,000 pigs, and about 800 sheep and goats. The peasants had taken their horses into the forests, and of those, 40 were brought back at liberation. These 40 horses and four cows were the sum total of livestock on hand at liberation.

In 1944, owing to the lateness of the season and to lack of implements, seeds and livestock, the farmers were able to sow only a very small part of their land. Most of the area brought into cultivation that first year had to be spaded by hand, because there was no draught power. In 1945 the farmers succeeded in bringing half of their their cropland under cultivation, still substituting hand spading for ploughing to a considerable extent.

As stated earlier, the area of this collective is 1,500 hectares. About 200 lectares are in meadows, 69 hectares in woods, and 421 hectares in pastures, gullies, and roads. The pre-war crop area was 810 hectares, and in 1946, this had been largely restored, except for hops, but not the pre-war yields. The following table shows the areas of cultivation in 1945 and 1946.

TABLE V

241 474 Lenin Collective Farm, Minsk Raion, Byelorussian S.S.R.: Crop Areas in 1945 and 1946 (in hectares)

	1945		1946	
Grain				
Oats	125		155	
Barley	75		75	
Wheat	25		19	
Winter rye	nil		186	
Winter wheat	"		8.5	
Buckwheat	10		8	
Total grain		235		451.5
Potatoes	100		94	
Vegetables	20		14	
Lupin (sown with rye)	nil		(83)	
Lupin (for seed)	10		9	
Clover	nil		90	
Hops	"		2[1]	
Total area sown		365		660
Fallow		445		150
Total cropland		810		810

[1]Pre-war area of hopyard, 4.5 hectares

Source: UNRRA Mission to Byelorussia, Minsk.

474 Special mention should be made of the hopyard, which before the war was a very profitable enterprise, bringing in a gross income of 65,000 roubles in 1940. The hops died out during the war and were replanted in 1946; they are expected to produce a marketable crop this year (1947).

433 Productivity of the Lenin collective farm[1] in 1946 was down to 40 per cent. below pre-war yields. The grain yield was 1.0 to 1.2
● 241 metric tons per hectare, compared with yields of 1.6 to 1.8 tons per
474 hectare before the war. The potato crop was only 8 tons per hectare, half the pre-war yield of 16 tons, because the farm had unusually bad luck with potatoes in 1946, several fields being washed out completely.

The extreme decline is attributed to shortages of artificial fertilizers, formerly used in large amounts; the shortage of manure, resulting from the greatly diminished livestock herds; and the lack of machinery and manpower.

Ploughing is shallower than before the war; and seed bed preparation, less careful. The farmers realize that their ploughing and seed bed preparation are below the standards of good farm practice, but they are unable to do better until they get more tractors, implements, and horses. Before the war this farm customarily hired three or four tractors from the M.T.S.; in 1946 it was able to secure only one. Only 86 horses were available in 1946, and these on the average were smaller than before the war, and could not be fed as well. However, productivity in 1946 was greater than in the preceding year, chiefly because the farm had more men, more horses, and more equipment.

The Extent of the Post-War Recovery

433 In the Byelorussian Republic as a whole the crop year 1945 was the
241 first full year of reoccupation by Byelorussians. By 1946 agricultural production had made definite progress toward supplying the population with food. The sown area in 1946 reached 76 per cent. of pre-war, but the level of yields was depressed by inadequate soil preparation, shortages of fertilizers, and unfavourable weather. As a result the grain crop, although better than in 1945, was still only half of pre-war. The vegetable crop, grown largely from UNRRA seeds, was from 75 to 80 per cent. of pre-war in total production; while the potato crop, because rainfall was heavy during part of the growing season and because plantings were only 60 per cent. of pre-war, reached less than half pre-war in total output.

Seed Production

433 The inadequacy of seed supplies has been a serious hindrance to
246 full recovery of the pre-war area of cultivation. Particularly short were vegetable seeds (except potatoes), clovers, vetch, and timothy and other grasses, most of which are biennials or perennials requiring two years for the production of seed. There is also a shortage of flax seed;

[1] [See cat 116, pp 15-16 - Analyst]

648 742 Apart from the penicillin plant, other big items in the UNRRA medical programme include electrocardiographs, X-ray machines and film, and artificial limb manufacturing equipment. Drug requirements have involved the procurement of quinine and, as a substitute, atabrine. By the end of January 1947, slightly less than one metric ton of atabrine had been shipped.

743 648 Not the least of UNRRA's contribution to Byelorussian health has been the soap supplies furnished. In 1946 the only soap available in the hospitals and sanitoria (and this means generally the only soap available anywhere), came from UNRRA sources. This was also true of a large part of the diet of patients, which came from UNRRA food supplies; and of blankets and bedding, which were distributed to hospitals and children's homes.

Still among the urgent requirements in Byelorussian hospitals are beds and bedding, laboratory equipment - including more X-ray machines, microscopes, stains and medea, drugs, and lamps - furniture, kitchen equipment, food, and soap.

Agricultural Rehabilitation Supplies

648 •241 UNRRA agricultural rehabilitation supplies began to arrive in the B.S.S.R. in February 1946 and consisted almost entirely of seeds. At the end of July the Byelorussian Government acknowledged receipt of 5,300 tons of vegetable and other seeds, which were estimated to be sufficient for planting from half a million to 600,000 hectares; and since favourable weather permitted late sowing, less than a thousand tons had to be held over for use in 1947. On all the farms visited by the UNRRA Mission to Byelorussia, the vegetable, clover, vetch, timothy and other grass crops had been started fron UNRRA seed.

Besides seeds - an important contribution toward increased food supplies - UNRRA has shipped fishing equipment, food processing equipment, and farm machinery - chiefly tractors. Deliveries of the latter, however, were heartbreakingly slow; and it was only in December 1946 that the first 221 UNRRA tractors arrived. The difficulty of procuring tractors has been one of the greatest obstacles to farm recovery in Byelorussia. The Mission estimated that had UNRRA tractors been available before August 1946, grain cultivation and production would have increased by 500 hectares and 500 tons for each tractor delivered.

Altogether, UNRRA plans to furnish over 800 tractors to the B.S.S.R.

648 Industrial Rehabilitation Supplies

Shipments of industrial supplies up to January 31, 1947, amounted to 14,495 gross long tons valued at 10,081,000 dollars. Largest items were public utilities equipment (power generators, pipe for gas and water mains, etc.) and raw materials, chemicals and engineering stores. The following table shows the shipments by value as well as by tonnage.